St Nicholas (Germantown)

TYPE	DIOCESE	NAME
Congregation	Washington	

TYPES OF WORK	POSITION TITLE/ROLE
Full Time	Rector/Priest-in-Charge

ROLE SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION

St. Nicholas Episcopal Church is a vibrant parish in Montgomery County, Maryland, seeking a full-time rector who will join us in our journey to becoming a beloved community of God's grace where all belong. Serving one of the nation's most diverse communities, we live our faith through worship, authentic relationships, compassionate service, and engagement with our neighbors.

We seek a spiritual and collaborative pastor, preacher, and teacher who will help us deepen our personal relationship with God, grow as disciples, nurture belonging, strengthen relationships with our interfaith partners, enhance connections to the wider community, and discern where God is leading us next.

We are open to welcoming a newly ordained priest who brings a deep spiritual grounding. Our small parish offers a supportive, collaborative environment where a new rector can develop confidence and expand skills.

CURRENT STATUS	RECEIVING NAMES FROM	TO
Receiving names	09/01/2026	12/31/2026

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please send a cover letter, resume, one recorded sermon, Vocation Hub profile, and references to the Rev. Canon Anna Olson, aolson@edow.org

CANDIDATE NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. How do you approach pastoral care in your ministry?, 2. How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?, 5. What has been your experience leading change in the Church?, 9. In what ways have you grown in cultural competency as a leader?, 10. What theological convictions shape your ministry?, 12. Describe a recent ministry experiment or innovation., 15. How do you take care of your well-being-spiritually, emotionally, and physically?

CONTACT

NAME	Mr. Robert McCartin
ROLE	Senior Warden and Head of Search Committee
ORGANIZATION	Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church
PHONE NUMBER	(301) 785-0005
EMAIL ADDRESS	bob.mccartin@gmail.com

POSITION DETAILS

ORDERS OF MINISTRY
Priest

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
Mid-Atlantic

WORK ENVIRONMENT
In Person

MINISTRY SETTING
Mixed Setting

PAROCHIAL REPORT DATA

AVG. SUNDAY ATT.	ANNUAL BUDGET
39	224185

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW NARRATIVE

Selling half of our substantial amount of land (6.5 acres of 13) reduced our monthly mortgage payment by more than half, taking pressure off our annual budget going forward.
We have grown our congregation slightly in the last year despite our rector's retirement. Total pledge income is slightly higher than a year ago.
During our rector transition, we employ a choir director, part-time administrator, supply priest, and vocational deacon.

FINANCIAL RESOURCE TYPE None

STIPEND, HOUSING, AND BENEFITS

COMPENSATION/SALARY DETAIL

RANGE $75,001 - $100,000

DETAILS

Cash salary plus housing $85,000-$89,000, SECA Allowance 7.65% of cash salary plus housing.

HOUSING/RECTORY TYPE

TYPE OF HOUSING PROVIDED Cash Stipend

DETAILS

Cash Stipend

SECA REIMBURSEMENT DETAIL

REIMBURSEMENT OFFERED Half

DETAILS

Half

MEDICAL & PENSION BENEFITS DETAIL

PENSION PLAN

In compliance with CPF requirements

HEALTHCARE OPTIONS

Clergy +1

DETAILS

Health insurance coverage is employee +1 on the EDOW base plan, church pays 80% and insured pays 20%.

VACATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND OTHER BENEFITS

VACATION & LEAVE DETAILS

In alignment with EDOW guidelines. 4 weeks vacation (20 days) in addition to the breaks after Easter and Christmas (that is, a quiet week for you and staff with only the Sunday worship service to lead.)

CONTINUING EDUCATION DETAILS

Yes. To be negotiated

SABBATICAL PROVISION DETAILS

In alignment with EDOW guidelines:
To support the rector in professional and spiritual renewal, and where possible according to parish budget, the Vestry will:
a) Grant three (3) months of Sabbatical Leave after the fifth year and every five yearsthereafter.
b) Grant such leave with the understanding that clergy will not be absent from the parish for more than three (3) consecutive months in any one year. Sabbatical leave is to be scheduled with parish leadership for a time that is not disruptive to parish life.
c) Work with clergy to arrange sabbaticals in accordance with Diocesan policy, understanding that sabbatical is not an entitlement for time served, but rather an investment in future ministry and that the rector will return from any sabbatical to serve for a minimum of one full additional year and, normatively, for several more.

TRAVEL/AUTO ACCOUNT DETAILS

Yes. For travel to visit parishioners and other actions to support parish operation. We will reimburse mileage at the standard government rate.

EQUIPMENT/PHONE DETAILS

We will provide a laptop if needed. We assume the new rector will use her/his cell, when not in the office. Monthly allowance of $60 toward the cost of a telephone and cellular service. A mobile number shall be published to insure the rector's ready accessibility in case of emergencies.

OTHER BENEFITS OR COMMENTS

DIOCESAN COMPENSATION INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE)

FORMAT None

MINISTRY CONTEXT AND DESIRED SKILLS

WHAT ARE YOUR COMMUNITY'S HOPES FOR THIS POSITION?

We believe God continues to call St. Nicholas to walk the way of Jesus-to grow deeper in faith and wider in welcome. To help us live into that calling, we hope to welcome a rector who will walk alongside us as we continue becoming a beloved community of God's grace where all belong. Together, we seek to deepen our life of worship, strengthen discipleship across every generation, expand our engagement with our neighbors, and faithfully discern where God is leading us next. We believe that as we grow deeper in faith, our community naturally grows wider, welcoming new people into lives transformed by God's grace.

We are seeking a thoughtful preacher who connects Scripture to everyday life, a compassionate pastor who walks with people through every season, and a collaborative leader who recognizes and develops the gifts already present within our congregation. We value shared ministry and hope for a rector who listens well, empowers others, communicates openly, and leads with humility, wisdom, and joy.

Rooted in the Episcopal tradition and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit, we hope to strengthen our culture of belonging, broaden our service to the wider community, build on our outreach and interfaith relationships, deepen scriptural study and welcome new generations into the life of our parish. Above all, we seek a rector who believes God is already at work in the world and will help us recognize that work, join it faithfully, and continue becoming the community God is calling us to be.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Collaborative Leadership, Fundraising and/or Capital Campaigns, Leadership Development, Personnel/Staff Development

MINISTRY SKILLS

Children & Family Formation, Church Growth, Community Building, Creation Care, Formation, Grief & Loss, Interfaith Cooperation, Outreach, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Direction

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English

LANGUAGES WRITTEN

English

LANGUAGES REQUIRED TO LEAD WORSHIP

English

1. **What is your organization's mission and focus?**

Describe your core mission and ministry priorities. What values guide your work, and what is your community or organization striving to embody in this season of ministry?

St. Nicholas holds a simple conviction: God's grace comes first. Long before we understand every prayer or discover where we belong, God is already reaching toward us in love. That truth shapes our mission and our common life.

Our mission is to go forth to become a beloved community of God's grace where all belong. We understand this as the rhythm of our common life: grace creates belonging; belonging nurtures formation; formation inspires service; service extends grace.

We seek to make God's grace visible in everyday life-whether gathering at Christ's table, tending our Nourishing Garden, partnering with neighbors of other faiths, or accompanying one another through seasons of joy and grief. Newcomers often tell us they feel at home quickly, drawn in by genuine hospitality and the sense that their presence matters.

Our ministry priorities flow from that mission. We gather for worship centered on Word and Sacrament, where thoughtful preaching, beautiful liturgy, and uplifting music draw us more deeply into the presence of Christ. We form disciples of every generation through lifelong learning, prayer, and shared life. We nurture authentic relationships through pastoral care that celebrates milestones and walks tenderly with those who suffer. Beyond our walls, we serve our neighbors through outreach, creation care, and longstanding interfaith partnerships. Across all ministries, we strive to recognize and call forth the gifts of every person.

Our life together is guided by grace, curiosity, compassion, collaboration, and joy. We believe faithful questions strengthen faith, every person has gifts to offer, and the Church is at its best when worship, formation, pastoral care, and service are woven together into one life of discipleship.

In this season of ministry, we are deepening our culture of belonging; strengthening lifelong formation; expanding opportunities for children, youth, and adults; building on our commitment to community engagement; and faithfully stewarding the people, gifts, resources, and campus entrusted to our care for future generations. We welcome a rector who will join us in this work and help us grow in grace.

Above all, we seek to remain a community that is always becoming - listening for God's voice, responding with faith, and inviting others to discover that they belong.

2. How would you describe your ministry context?

Share about the setting and community you serve. What are the unique characteristics of your context - such as urban, rural, or suburban dynamics; multi-faith or multicultural environments; community partnerships; or social and cultural factors that shape your ministry?

St. Nicholas is planted in Montgomery County, Maryland, where our setting uniquely bridges rural and urban life. From our church grounds, one can still glimpse open fields, yet just minutes north are apartment communities and residential neighborhoods of Germantown. To our south are the urban/suburban neighborhoods of Gaithersburg, Darnestown, and North Potomac.

We have cultivated meaningful partnerships with 7 neighboring faith communities to the south of us along Darnestown Rd. St. Nicholas is the northernmost of these faith communities which stretch 8 miles south. Our commitment to interfaith relationships is not simply one ministry among many; it reflects our conviction that God's love becomes more visible when communities of faith work together for the common good. Through our Nourishing Garden, outreach ministries, and interfaith collaboration, we seek to join God's work already unfolding around us rather than simply creating programs for ourselves.

One of our hopes for the next chapter of our ministry is to become more visible in our community, more engaged with our neighbors, and more intentional in inviting others to discover St. Nicholas. We believe many of our neighbors simply do not yet know we are here. Like many congregations, we recognize that our future will not simply look like our past. We hope to grow both deeper and wider- welcoming new generations, reflecting more fully the cultural diversity of our surrounding community, and strengthening the long-term vitality of our parish. We see particular opportunities to build relationships with our Spanish-speaking neighbors and to discern how God may be calling us to expand our welcome in the years ahead.

We believe the Church is called to be more than a destination for those who gather on Sunday. We want to be a faithful presence within the communities around us. Each day, thousands of people pass our church. We believe God has entrusted us with both a place of worship and a visible witness to the surrounding community.

3. How would you describe your congregational/diocesan leadership culture?

Reflect on how your community approaches leadership - what styles and qualities you value in clergy, how leadership is shared between clergy and laity, and how you navigate change and challenges.

Leadership at St. Nicholas is rooted in shared ministry. We believe God calls the whole people of God into ministry, and our clergy and lay leaders work together to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us. Leadership is built on trust, open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the mission of the parish.

Our rector's role is to preach, teach, shepherd, and equip others for ministry. In turn, our vestry, ministry leaders, and congregation bring wisdom, experience, creativity, and a deep commitment to the shared work of the Church. We value leaders who listen before they lead, encourage collaboration over control, and help others discover and use their gifts.

Because relationships matter, we approach change through prayer, conversation, and discernment rather than quick decisions. We have learned that healthy leadership creates space for many voices, honors our traditions while remaining open to new possibilities, and trusts that God is continually calling us toward deeper faithfulness together.

4. How would you describe your congregational/diocesan liturgical styles and practice?

Share how worship is shaped in your community - what influences your liturgical life, how you balance tradition and innovation, and how liturgy reflects your theology and context.

At St. Nicholas, worship is where we gather to encounter the living Christ. Rooted in the beauty and rhythm of the Episcopal tradition, our worship is neither "high" nor "low," but a creative middle that embraces both traditional and new liturgical expressions.

Our worship is reverent yet joyful, grounded in the richness of the Book of Common Prayer while remaining open to creative expressions that help people encounter Christ in fresh and meaningful ways. Alongside our regular Sunday Eucharist, we embrace offerings such as Jazz Mass, Taizé prayer, and seasonal services like Lament & Hope, creating space for celebration, grief, healing, and wonder. We also look for tangible ways to help people of all ages experience the stories of our faith. On Good Shepherd Sunday, children met live sheep during Sunday School while parishioners visited with them after worship, creating a memorable connection to the Gospel story.

Music is central to our worship. We draw from The Hymnal 1982, Lift Every Voice and Sing II, and other Episcopal resources. Our music director carefully selects hymns and music selections that relate to the biblical readings each Sunday. In addition to being an exceptional and gifted pianist, she serves as choir director and frequently invites guest instrumental artists to accompany our choir. Our flexible worship space allows us to gather in meaningful ways-from handwashing and table communion on Maundy Thursday to the Blessing of the Animals. We livestream our principal service, offer healing prayer, and bring Holy Communion to parishioners who are unable to worship in person, extending the liturgy beyond the sanctuary.

Children are active participants in our worshiping life, reminding us that faith begins with curiosity and grows in community. Occasionally, a joyful "AAAAMEN!" from a young child rings through the sanctuary after receiving Holy Communion, and the congregation can't help but smile. Like our namesake, we cherish our children, believing they belong fully in the life and worship of the Church.

Every Sunday concludes with words that have become the heartbeat of our common life:

"Let us go forth to become a beloved community of God's grace where all belong."

Those words remind us that worship does not end with the dismissal. It continues as we carry Christ's love into our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and the wider community.

5. How does your congregation/diocese approach cultural identity and inclusion?

Reflect on how your community engages diverse cultural identities, fosters belonging, and responds to the needs of a diverse or evolving population.

Belonging is one of the first gifts we offer. We believe every person bears the image of God and is worthy of dignity, compassion, and welcome. Long before someone fully understands our traditions or feels certain about faith, they are already invited into relationship, conversation, and community. We are grateful to serve one of the nation's most diverse communities, and we see that diversity as both a gift and an invitation. While our congregation continues to grow toward reflecting the community around us, we intentionally create opportunities to celebrate different cultures, perspectives, and experiences. Our annual International Celebration brings members together to share food, traditions, and stories from their heritage, while our participation in Juneteenth observances and
Pride Month expresses our conviction that every person is created in God's image and worthy of dignity, love, and respect. These moments remind us that belonging grows as we listen, learn, and celebrate God's grace at work in one another's lives.
Belonging at St. Nicholas is more than hospitality. It means listening with curiosity, building authentic relationships, calling forth each person's gifts, and creating opportunities for people of every age, background, and life experience to participate fully in the life of the Church. As our community continues to grow and change, we remain committed to learning, listening, and asking how God's grace is inviting us to widen the circle.

MINISTRY MEDIA AND LINKS

Parish Website	**https://www.saintnicks.com/**

NARRATIVES

4. How does your congregation/diocese discern and adapt to the changing needs of your community?

Share an example of how your congregation listened, responded, and experimented faithfully in your context.

As immigration enforcement increasingly affected families in our local community, parents were detained, leaving children without reliable access to food and placing tremendous strain on families already living with uncertainty. One parishioner felt called to respond. Her concern resonated throughout the congregation, and together we began asking how St. Nicholas might help.

Our first response wasn't to design a new ministry. It was to ask, "What is needed?" We offered our building as a possible food distribution center. Although our location ultimately proved too far north to best serve the families in need, the need itself remained, inviting deeper reflection. Through the relationships we had already built with neighboring faith communities, we helped connect the ministry with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, where it now serves as a weekly food distribution center. One parishioner became one of the ministry's lead organizers. Another used his technical gifts to create the volunteer website that connected community members with the growing effort, while several members of St. Nicholas continue to serve each week, sorting, packing, and distributing food to local families.

The experience reminded us that discernment is not about protecting our own ideas or insisting that ministry happen within our walls. It is about listening carefully, responding with humility, and trusting that God is often already at work through relationships we have cultivated. Sometimes our role is to lead; sometimes it is to strengthen the work of others. In either case, our calling is the same-to join God's work wherever it is unfolding.

5. How does your congregation/diocese sustain its spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being?

Ministry is deeply meaningful and often demanding. Share how your community nurtures its collective health and sense of call.

When a family shared that their newborn was failing to thrive, our prayer group immediately added his name to its text thread - 13 prayers were lifted in quick succession. A meal schedule was organized, parishioners checked in regularly, and the congregation surrounded the family with practical care,
encouragement, and hope. Today, our sweet baby is thriving.
That response reflects how we care for one another. Prayer is woven into the fabric of our life together through weekly worship, monthly healing prayer, and an active prayer ministry that carries one another's joys and burdens. Care extends beyond prayer into meals, visits, rides to church, and quiet acts of kindness that often happen without fanfare. We ensure that everyone can participate fully in the life of the parish by creating welcoming, accessible spaces, including offering chairs with arms for those with mobility challenges and transportation to those who need it.
One of our ongoing challenges is that much of our ministry leadership rests on the shoulders of a relatively small number of people. As we look toward the future, we hope to broaden participation, nurture new leaders, and create sustainable rhythms of shared ministry. In the meantime, we make conscious efforts to care for one another-especially those caring for aging parents or navigating personal hardship-and to notice when someone needs encouragement and support before they have to ask.
We believe the well-being of a congregation is sustained through relationships shaped by God's grace. Whether celebrating the birth of a child, walking with someone through illness or grief, supporting caregivers, or simply sharing the ordinary moments of life, we strive to be a community where people are known, supported, and spiritually nourished.

6. In what ways is your congregation/diocese engaged in the wider Church or local community?

Whether through diocesan leadership, ecumenical partnerships, civic involvement, or community organizing, describe how your congregation serves beyond its own walls.

On Juneteenth 2024, one of our parishioners became Frederick Douglass. The following year, he returned as Josiah Henson, while members of the St. Nicholas choir joined voices with singers from neighboring faith communities, filling the gathering with hymns of reflection and joy.
Commemorating the 250th anniversary of Montgomery County, the 2025 celebration explored the county's complex racial history while highlighting stories of reconciliation, resilience, and hope. Another St. Nicholas parishioner served on the five-member interfaith scripting team that developed the event's theme and narrative, helping shape an experience that invited our community to listen, reflect, and grow together.
That partnership grew out of the Diocese of Washington's three-year Tending Our Soil initiative, which invited congregations to discern how God's love might take root in their own communities. For St. Nicholas, one answer was deeper collaboration. We discovered that God's grace is multiplied when communities of faith work together in shared purpose. Today, we are active partners in the Rt. 28 Quince Orchard Interfaith Team, joining seven neighboring faith communities to build relationships, foster understanding, and serve the common good.
That same spirit shapes our engagement throughout the year. We support Germantown HELP, sponsor the annual Interfaith Labor Day 5K, steward a section of Route 28, partner with Sacred Grounds to restore native landscapes, and host community events such as Blessing of the Backpacks, Trunk-or-Treat, and Christmas gift drives.
For us, serving beyond our walls is not an extension of our ministry-it is where much of our ministry happens. We seek to be a faithful presence in the wider community, joining God's work wherever it is already taking root.

7. How does your congregation/diocese approach pastoral care?

Reflect on how your community walks with one another and with neighbors through life's joys and challenges - what guides your approach?

Pastoral care begins with presence. We believe Christ often meets people not through grand gestures, but through faithful companions who show up-in prayer, in conversation, at a hospital bedside, around a kitchen table, or simply by sitting quietly with someone who is hurting.

That care takes many forms. We try to notice when someone needs a visit, a prayer, Holy Communion, or simply a caring presence. Sometimes that means visiting someone in the hospital or a retirement community; other times it means a phone call, a meal, or simply being present. Our prayer ministry faithfully carries the joys and burdens of our congregation, our neighbors, and the wider world. We seek to notice when someone is struggling and respond in ways that remind them they are not alone.

Pastoral care also calls us to recognize and bless those who care for others. On the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, we invited two local fire stations to share in our celebration. Although they were unable to attend, we blessed medals during the service and later delivered them, along with cupcakes, to each station as expressions of our gratitude, encouragement, and prayers for their safety. Moments like these remind us that pastoral care extends beyond the walls of the Church to all who carry responsibility for the well-being of our community.

We believe no one should have to carry life’s joys or burdens alone. Through prayer, Holy Communion, quiet companionship, and simple acts of kindness, we seek to embody Christ’s love by walking with one another through every season of life. As a small parish with a deep commitment to pastoral presence, we hope to partner with a rector who will offer care and also cultivate and empower a team of lay caregivers. Together, we aim to strengthen a ministry of compassion that is shared, sustainable, and grounded in the gifts God has entrusted to our community. We want every person who comes among us — and every neighbor entrusted to our care — to know they do not walk alone.

8. How is your congregation/diocese preparing for the Church of the future?

Ministry is always evolving. Share how your congregation is growing, adapting, or learning to meet the changing needs of the Church and the world.

Preparing for the Church of the future begins with listening. Several young families quietly shared that they loved St. Nicholas but struggled because there was no dedicated space where children could wonder, learn, and grow in faith. Sunday School met in the same multi-purpose area used before and after worship-a space filled with conversation, movement, and distraction. Their concerns invited us to ask an important question: What kind of church are we becoming if we do not intentionally invest in the faith of our youngest members?

We could have accepted that limitation. Instead, we chose to act. We envisioned a Learning Cottage-a dedicated home for children's formation-even though we did not yet have the financial resources to build it. The journey required courage and perseverance. We expanded our mortgage, navigated construction delays during the COVID years, and ultimately scaled the project from two classrooms to one. In September 2024, the Learning Cottage welcomed its first children. Today it houses our Godly Play program, where children encounter Scripture through storytelling, imagination, and holy wonder.

The Learning Cottage represents more than a building. It reflects our conviction that preparing for the Church of the future means investing in people today. We believe children are not simply the future of the Church-they are fully part of the Church now.

As we look ahead, we strive to become a parish where every generation finds a place to belong and grow. We want to strengthen ministry with children, youth, young adults, and families; expand opportunities for lifelong formation that are accessible to people in every stage of life; and continue exploring new ways of gathering, learning, and praying while remaining rooted in the richness of the Episcopal tradition. We recognize that the Church of the future will look different from the Church of today. Rather than fear that change, we hope to meet it with faithful curiosity, deep listening, and confidence that God is already preparing the way.

9. What does stewardship mean to your congregation/diocese, and how do you practice it?

Describe how your community approaches generosity, resource management, and financial discipleship.

Stewardship at St. Nicholas begins with gratitude. We believe everything we have is a gift from God, entrusted to us for the sake of others. Stewardship includes recognizing and calling forth the gifts God has entrusted to every person, then creating opportunities for those gifts to flourish in service of God's mission.

Each fall, our stewardship campaign invites parishioners to reflect not simply on how much they give, but why they give. Members share personal stories of gratitude and transformation that remind us generosity begins with lives changed by God's grace. One testimony in 2024 moved our rector to tears. Those stories strengthen our common life and inspire others to offer their own gifts with joy.

Generosity takes many forms. Parishioners tend the Nourishing Garden, whose produce supports Nourish Now, a local nonprofit that provides fresh food to families in need. They prepare hospitality, share meals, donate plants and food, offer their skills and time, and volunteer wherever there is need. Financial gifts sustain daily ministry and also support partners such as Stepping Stones Shelter, which provides emergency housing and services for families experiencing homelessness.

We also steward God's creation through our vegetable garden and solar panels, caring for the land entrusted to us as part of our witness to future generations.

For us, stewardship is ultimately an act of joy. We give not out of obligation, but out of gratitude for God's generosity toward us and confidence in the future God is creating. Every gift-whether time, talent, resources, or prayer-helps extend God's grace through our congregation into the wider community.

10. How has your congregation/diocese experienced and addressed conflict?

Conflict is part of communal life. Tell us about a time your congregation faced it and how you responded - what did you learn?

Conflict has taught us that faithfulness is not found in avoiding difficult conversations, but in approaching them with honesty, prayer, and mutual respect. Like every congregation, we have faced moments when deeply held hopes, differing perspectives, and changing realities required us to discern a faithful path forward together.

One of our most significant challenges involved the future of our campus. Years earlier, St. Nicholas had received a generous gift of land with the dream of one day building an expanded church and educational center. As financial realities changed-including a substantial mortgage and an approaching balloon payment-the congregation faced the difficult decision to sell a portion of that land to strengthen the church's long-term future. For many, it felt like letting go of a cherished dream. Through patient leadership, prayerful discernment, and open conversation, the congregation ultimately reached consensus, choosing long-term sustainability over holding tightly to the original vision.

A different kind of challenge emerged during the national conversations on racial justice following the death of George Floyd. Our rector invited the congregation into honest reflection through preaching and shared learning, including a parish-wide study of Isabel Wilkerson's book "Caste". While not everyone agreed with that direction, we remained committed to engaging difficult issues with grace and integrity. One longtime family ultimately chose to leave the parish, reminding us that faithful leadership sometimes requires difficult decisions and cannot always produce unanimous agreement.

These experiences have shaped our leadership culture. We have learned that healthy conflict is grounded in listening before reacting, speaking truthfully with compassion, and trusting that God can lead a community forward even when consensus takes time. We continue striving to be a congregation that approaches disagreement not with fear, but with humility, trust, and confidence that God's grace is present even in seasons of change.

11. What has been your congregation's/diocese's experience leading or navigating change?

Ministry often requires change. Reflect on a time your community embraced or navigated change - when it went well, when it didn't, and what it taught you about shared leadership.

Change has taught us that faithful leadership is less about having all the answers and more about trusting God-and one another-through seasons of uncertainty. Over the past several years, St. Nicholas has navigated significant transitions that have stretched us, challenged us, and ultimately strengthened our shared ministry.

One of our most significant transitions came with the call of our second rector. Our founding rector was enthusiastic, deeply beloved, and closely connected to the congregation. Stepping into that legacy was difficult and required patience, grace, and a willingness to build new relationships and leadership patterns together. Soon afterward, the pandemic complicated things further. Our new rector helped us overcome the initial paralysis/fear of the virus and led us through the process of rethinking what being a congregation required. We learned to livestream worship, gathered outdoors when we could, and

discovered new ways to remain connected when we could not be together physically. Although in-person attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, our ministry expanded in unexpected ways and our online presence became an enduring part of parish life.

When our rector retired in May 2025, we entered what many of us came to describe as a season of wilderness. Rather than rushing through it, we embraced it as a time for prayer, listening, and discernment. Our parish survey drew an exceptionally strong response, reflecting a congregation deeply invested in shaping its future together. Over the past year, one unexpected blessing has been the steadiness of our congregation during this interim season. We have been blessed with an incredible supply priest. No one has left following our rector's retirement. We have welcomed several newcomers and rejoiced in the return of a few familiar faces. Together, these have been quiet signs that even in seasons of wilderness, God continues to sustain and guide us.

These experiences have taught us that change is rarely linear and seldom easy. It requires humility, honest communication, shared leadership, and trust that the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church. We are learning that even in the wilderness, God is preparing something new-and that we are strongest when we walk that journey together.

12. What are your current strategic priorities or plans for the future?

Share about any existing strategic plans, visioning processes, or future priorities your community is pursuing. How do these goals reflect your mission and the needs of the people you serve? What hopes or aspirations are guiding your ministry in this season?

Our strategic priorities begin with our mission: to become a beloved community of God's grace where all belong. Every conversation about the future asks the same question: How can we grow deeper in faith and wider in welcome?

One important expression of that vision is the faithful stewardship of our campus. We believe our property is more than a place to maintain; it is a gift entrusted to us for God's mission. Every decision about our buildings and grounds is ultimately a decision about how we welcome people, nurture faith, and serve our community. We envision a parish columbarium that reflects our belief that belonging extends across generations and offers a lasting place of remembrance for parishioners and their loved ones. We hope to create a community labyrinth that provides a welcoming space for prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal for both our parish and the wider community. We also seek improved signage that more clearly communicates who we are and extends an invitation to the thousands of people who pass our church each day. These are not simply capital projects-they are ministry projects that embody hospitality, remembrance, prayer, and welcome.

The recent sale of a portion of our property has created an opportunity to reimagine the land that remains. We look forward to engaging the congregation and our next rector in a shared visioning process that asks how every part of our campus can best serve God's mission. Together, we will discern the placement of a future columbarium and labyrinth, explore the restoration of native landscapes, and imagine new ways our grounds can welcome neighbors and support ministry for generations to come.

At the same time, we recognize that our future depends on more than buildings. We aspire to become more visible in our surrounding communities, strengthen ministry with children, youth, young adults, and families, build deeper relationships with the diverse neighborhoods that surround us, and broaden

participation in the shared work of ministry. We want to grow not simply in numbers, but in our capacity to welcome, form, and serve.

As we welcome our next rector, we look forward to discerning these priorities together as part of a broader conversation about the future of St. Nicholas. Together, we will listen for where God is already at work, steward the gifts entrusted to us with wisdom, and continue becoming the community God is calling us to be.